

2014 Women's Legislative Briefing

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The 34th annual Women's Legislative Briefing was held on Sunday, January 26, 2014 at the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. The purpose of these Briefings is to inform Marylanders about state and federal legislative proposals of specific concern to women and families, and to build a strong advocacy for these important issues. This year, over 700 people attended.

Montgomery County Commission for Women, with the assistance of seventy-four women's and community organizations, planned the program. Forty-four of these organizations presented colorful and informative exhibits lining the hallways leading to the main conference auditorium. The Briefing was made possible by the funding and support from Kaiser Permanente our Gold Sponsor, AARP, our Silver Sponsor, and Sustaining Sponsors Maryland NOW and Washington Parent.



A pre-conference President's Networking Session provided the leaders of these community organizations an opportunity to meet with the keynote speaker in a conversation about social media and advocacy. It also provided a means for these groups to identify potential partners in the community addressing the same issues or implementing similar projects.

The plenary session was opened with greetings by Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, Delegate Jolene Ivey from Prince George's County and our federal legislators: Senator Ben Cardin, Congresswoman Donna Edwards, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Congressman John Sarbanes, and Congressman John Delaney. Kim Horn, President of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States and Hank Greenberg, Senior State Director of AARP Maryland also addressed the crowd giving unique perspectives on the health and welfare issues being discussed.





The highlight of the plenary session was a keynote address by Joanne Bamberger, author of Mothers of Intention: How Women & Social Media are Revolutionizing Politics in America. Ms. Bamberger spoke about the growing political influence of women online, including Netroots Nation, EMILY's List, Activism & Media & Policy Summit, BlogHer, Campaign Tech Conference and others.

A panel discussion on Women's Issues in Local Elected Office was skillfully moderated by Joanne Bamberger. Montgomery Councilwomen Valerie Ervin, Nancy Floreen and Nancy Navarro participated along with Prince George's County

Councilwoman Ingrid Turner providing valuable insights into their experience as women legislators.

The opening session was followed by eight seminars each featuring legislators and prominent advocates: Effective Legislative Advocacy, Advocating for Older Women's Issues, A Briefing on the Health Care Reform Act, Women in the Public Realm, Workplace Issues, Safety, Justice and Human Rights, Women, Families and Poverty, and a special presentation of *Miss Representation*, a compelling documentary the portrayal of women and girls in the media and its effects on women in the policy arena.



This year for the first time, the Legislative Briefing offered a 'Teen Track.' Parts of the documentary film *Miss Representation* were shown followed by small group discussions on the portrayal of women and girls in the media, objectification of women and girls and how this affects women in leadership roles, women in advocacy/civic engagement roles and girls' self image. A panel of young community leaders discussed women in leadership, politics, advocacy and community engagement. This event was well-received by the fifty teens in attendance.



At the closing ceremony, enthusiastic participants gathered to celebrate the induction of Senator Jennie Forehand and former Councilmember Valerie Ervin into the [Montgomery County Women's History Archive](#). The archive was created in 2002 to recognize the contributions of women of historical significance to the county. The biographies and photographs of Forehand and Ervin are featured on the Commission for Women website.

The Montgomery County Commission for Women is grateful for the continuing cooperation and support it receives for the Women's Legislative Briefing. It is especially appreciative of the contributions of the seventy-four women's and community co-sponsoring organizations and the dozens of volunteers and hundreds of hours they lend to this effort, and to Kaiser Permanente and AARP without whose financial support this event would not be possible. The Commission also greatly appreciates the time and expertise donated by the 63 legislators, public officials, advocates and subject experts who donated their time to serve as speakers, panelists and moderators in the program. Above all, the Commission appreciates the hundreds of women and men who believe these issues are so important that they will give up an entire Sunday afternoon on a cold day in January to participate.

